AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A metal golf club head, comprising:

a ball hitting face made of metal, which includes ~~an integrally formed~~ a central portion and a peripheral portion surrounding at least a part of said central portion,

wherein ~~said golf club head is made of a metal, and~~ the hardness of the metal at said peripheral portion is lower than the hardness of the metal at said central portion.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) A metal golf club head, comprising:

a face member forming a ball hitting face, said ball hitting face including ~~an integrally formed~~ a central portion and a peripheral portion surrounding at least a part of said central portion,

wherein said golf club head is manufactured by a method comprising the steps of:

forming said face member from a raw material separately from other members used for said golf club head; and

subsequently welding said other members to said face member at a periphery of said face member, and

~~said golf club head is made of a metal, and~~ the hardness of the metal at said peripheral portion is smaller than the hardness of the metal at said central portion.

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) A golf club head according to claim 1, wherein

the width of said peripheral portion of said hitting face is in a range between about 5 and 20 mm, the width of said peripheral portion being determined by:

measuring a hardness distribution of said hitting face from an arbitrary point A on the edge of said hitting face, passing through the center of said hitting face, to a point B on the opposite edge of said hitting face;

determining the hardness of said central portion by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the center of said hitting face where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%;

B1

determining the hardness of said peripheral portion in the vicinity of the point A by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the point A where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%;

cont.

determining a point of measurement having a value of hardness closest to a mean value between the hardness of said central portion and the hardness of said peripheral portion; and

determining the width of said peripheral portion as a distance between the point A and the point of measurement.

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) A golf club head according to claim 2, wherein

the width of said peripheral portion of said hitting face is in the range between about 5 and 20 mm, the width of said peripheral portion being determined by:

measuring a hardness distribution of said hitting face from an arbitrary point A on the edge of said hitting face, passing through the center of said hitting face, to a point B on the opposite edge of said hitting face;

determining the hardness of said central portion by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the center of said hitting face where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%;

determining the hardness of said peripheral portion in the vicinity of the point A by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the point A where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%;

determining a point of measurement having a value of the hardness closest to a mean value between the hardness of said central portion and the hardness of said peripheral portion; and

determining the width of said peripheral portion which is a distance between the point A and the point of measurement.

Claim 5. (Original) A golf club head according to claim 1, wherein

the difference in the hardness between said central portion and said peripheral portion is equal to or greater than 50 in terms of the Vickers hardness, the hardness of said central portion and of said peripheral portion being determined by:

measuring a hardness distribution of said hitting face from an arbitrary point A on the edge of said hitting face, passing through the center of said hitting face, to a point B on the opposite edge of said hitting face;

determining the hardness of said central portion by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the center of said hitting face where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%; and

determining the hardness of said peripheral portion in the vicinity of the point A by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the point A where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%.

Claim 6. (Original) A golf club head according to claim 2, wherein

the difference in the hardness between said central portion and said peripheral portion is equal to or greater than 50 in terms of the Vickers hardness, the hardness of said central portion and of said peripheral portion being determined by:

measuring a hardness distribution of said hitting face from an arbitrary point A on the edge of said hitting face, passing through the center of said hitting face, to a point B on the opposite edge of said hitting face;

determining the hardness of said central portion by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the center of said hitting face where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%; and

determining the hardness of said peripheral portion in the vicinity of the point A by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the point A where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%.

Claim 7. (Original) A golf club head according to claim 3, wherein

the difference in the hardness between said central portion and said peripheral portion is equal to or greater than 50 in terms of the Vickers hardness,

the hardness of said central portion and of said peripheral portion being determined by:

measuring a hardness distribution of said hitting face from an arbitrary point A on the edge of said hitting face, passing through the center of said hitting face, to a point B on the opposite edge of said hitting face;

determining the hardness of said central portion by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the center of said hitting face where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%; and

determining the hardness of said peripheral portion in the vicinity of the point A by taking an average of the hardness measured in an area in the vicinity of the point A where the difference in hardness in the area is in the range of ±5%.

Claim 8. (Withdrawn)

Claim 9. (Withdrawn)

Claim 10. (Withdrawn)

Claim 11. (Withdrawn)

Claim 12. (Withdrawn)